

Conclusion

The raft is an unspectacular craft but nevertheless presents qualities that conferred it a place of choice in the sea world of the Polynesian: it is easy and fast to construct; it is stable and flexible which permitted it to be adapted to different situations; its elementary form (a simple platform⁴) was amenable for many different uses; and its buoyancy made it the best means of transport for heavy cargo—preferable even to a canoe.

The example of traditional rafts in the Gambiers illustrates perfectly the interest that Polynesians had in this kind of craft for a long time. Tradition shows that, for a very long time, only rafts were used for navigating through a large portion of this archipelago. A king, wishing to end a local war, could stop production of double canoes and not authorize the use of rafts, thus excluding the possibility of a surprise attack. This means of transport, perfected over a course of time and at times rigged with a sail situated before, could attain 17 meters in length and could transport in the neighborhood of a score of persons (Neyret 1974:31).

The presence of fishing fleets of rafts constitutes an interesting fact. In effect, it is a question of the reflection of a society that adapted to different aquatic conditions, diversified its uses and made them complimentary. It is therefore essential now to reckon this type of craft in all studies on the traditional nautical patrimony of the Pacific Islands, for the raft is the same image of a society which conducted these multiple and complex nautical activities.

References

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Footnotes

- 1 In the Banda sea (southeast of Indonesia), bamboo rafts were noted with kites made of braided palm leaves (Bidault 1945:73).
- 2 This text was sent to me by the late son of the author Raymond Teriimara Marua Te Po Teriieroo A Teriieroo I Te Rai Graffe, for which I am very grateful.
- 3 Probably a small snouted fish of the family *Exocoetidae*, or an *arguilette* of the family *Belonidae*.
- 4 It is interesting to note the difference in conception between the canoe structure which is raised above the water and the raft which is only on the surface. The existence of these two types of craft show that the Polynesians possessed a varied and complementary nautical fleet.



Easter Island Foundation Fundación Rapanui

In Chile the summer months of January and February are slow for libraries, and the time has been used to begin the immense task of cataloging the thousands of photographs in the Mulloy Library collection. This job will be followed by re-jacketing all the prints and negatives in archival plastic sleeves, and re-processing those that are beginning to yellow with time. Meanwhile the search for larger quarters for the Mulloy Library in Vina del Mar continues, and the bureaucratic procedures are underway to allow us to establish a Mulloy Library on Rapa Nui in the existing 'gift shop' building next to the Sebastian Englert Museum.

One of the summer visitors to the library was Phineas Mulloy Kelly, grandson of William Mulloy who bicycled with his friend Chris Jenkins all the way from Laramie, Wyoming, to Vina—and then on to their final destination, Santiago. They celebrated by attending, along with 50,000 others, a concert of the Rolling Stones on February 19th.

William Liller, CEO

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Rapanuiphile Ben Baldanza has donated a 386 computer to the Foundation. Due to problems involved in shipping it to Chile, the EIF has decided to award the equipment to a deserving student or researcher who has a special interest in Rapa Nui. If you are interested, please submit a brief proposal telling why you should be awarded the computer. Include information about your area of interest in Easter Island, current research projects, or other Rapanui-related work.

Send your proposal to Barbara Hinton, Easter Island Foundation, 4928 Feagan Street, Houston, TX 77007. Due to shipping, customs and other complications, we must limit the award to U.S. residents or visitors to the U.S. Deadline for applications: June 15, 1995.

Computer specifications: an early model 20 megahertz 386 with 80 meg hard drive/color monitor/2 floppy drives: 5 1/4 and 3 1/2/ Windows software.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

You can honor and remember others through a Memorial Gift to the Easter Island Foundation. A Memorial Gift is a special way to pay tribute to the memory of a loved one. By providing support for the Foundation and its programs, such as scholarship for islanders, your gift can live on into the future.

Recent Memorial Gifts to the Foundation have been received from Mrs. A.R. Bennett in memory of Dr. and Mrs. Joe Howard, Dr. Gilbert M. Hogaboom, and Mr. George W. Ware. Please send Memorial Gifts to the Easter Island Foundation, Attn: Barbara Hinton, 4928 Feagan Street, Houston, TX 77007.